



How to teach creativity?

How to motivate students to be creative?

The importance of creativity for the future of our students

- “The biggest challenge facing organizations today is not finding or hiring cheap workers, but rather hiring individuals with brainpower (both natural and trained) and especially the ability to think creatively” (The Economist).
- Creativity has often been neglected in educational systems.

The importance of creativity in the classroom

- Creativity “may be harder to find in older children and adults because their creative potential has been suppressed by a society that encourages intellectual conformity” (Sternberg 1999, p. 93).
- Conventional approaches tend to crush students’ natural inclinations toward creative and divergent thinking (Robinson 2011).
- “When students are taught in a way that fits how they think, they do better in school. Children with creative or practical abilities, who are almost never taught or assessed in a way that matches their pattern of abilities, may be at a disadvantage in course after course, year after year” (Sternberg 2006, p. 94).

The role of teachers

- The role of the teachers and classroom settings is an important influence upon student beliefs and development of their own creativity.
- Creative teachers show a willingness to try new things, give real world assignments, and use cross-disciplinary approaches (Henriksen & Mishra, 2015).
- Their students tend to be enthusiastic and engaged (Kiely, 1998), building the skills and habits of mind for success in problem solving and applying knowledge (Zhao, 2012).

The need for a cultural change in higher education

- “To help teachers understand and enhance their own creativity and to recognize this as an integral part of their professionalism.” (Wisdom 2007, p. 183)
- Ensuring an institutional climate that encourages reflection and the personal development of both teachers and students.

Strategies to empower creativity in higher education (1)

- Having sufficient time and space in the curriculum to allow students to develop their creativity.
- Having sufficiently varied and diverse working situations to enable all students to be creative.
- Allowing students the freedom to work in new and interesting ways.
- Challenging students with real, demanding and exciting work.

Strategies to empower creativity in higher education (2)

- Designing assessment that allows for outcomes that are not narrowly pre-determined.
- Fostering a departmental climate that encourages reflection and personal development for both staff and students.
- Continuing academic debate within the discipline, and dialogue with the various stakeholders, about the nature of the subject and the role of creativity within it. (Wisdom 2007; p. 193)

Strategies to empower creativity in higher education

(3)

- Taking into account the students' previous knowledge.
- Reserving time for dialogue, listening to students with respect.
- Helping the students to get rid of emotional blocks, like fear of making mistakes and the fear of being criticized.

Strategies to empower creativity in higher education

(4)

- Encouraging students to pursue topics that interest them most.
- Diversifying the teaching strategies used in the classroom.
- Exposing students only to constructive criticism.
- Encouraging students to express new ideas.
- Asking provocative questions.
- Maintaining a positive relationship with students.
- Promoting a psychologically safe environment, in which students are not afraid to expose themselves.
- Understanding individual differences concerning behaviours and problem-solving skills.

Strategies to empower creativity in higher education (5)

- to facilitate the development of teachers' creativity during their own schooling process, especially during the years of teacher professional preparation.
- This should not be done by including one discipline on creativity in teacher preparation curricula, but through a truly creative teaching and learning environment, in which the future teachers experience as students, what they can do later as teachers; and where they find ways for the expressing of their creative potential (Martínez, 2002; Romo & Sanz, 2000).

Can creativity be taught?

- Creativity is a thinking skill - can only be “learned by doing” or as “learning in action”
- Creativity involves approaches to thinking rather than a set body of knowledge that can be taught.
- We can reinforce and support sustained creativity as a “habit of the mind.” However, this also means that the education system and educators must recognize and support a sustained facilitation of creativity as a habit of the mind and agree upon what that is and how to engage it. This can vary greatly across contexts and cultures.

Sources

- Alencar, Eunice ML, Denise de Souza Fleith, and Nielsen Pereira. "Creativity in higher education: Challenges and facilitating factors." *Temas em Psicologia* 25, no. 2 (2017): 553-561.
- Cropley, David H. "Promoting creativity and innovation in engineering education." *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts* 9, no. 2 (2015): 161.
- MISHRA, P. U. N. Y. A. "We teach who we are: Creativity in the lives and practices of accomplished teachers." *Teachers College Record* 117 (2015): 070303.
- Wyse, Dominic, and Anusca Ferrari. "Creativity and education: Comparing the national curricula of the states of the European Union and the United Kingdom." *British Educational Research Journal* 41, no. 1 (2015): 30-47.